



## **Blaze Fast-Fire'd Pizza Announces Grand Opening of University of Connecticut Location**

*Free Pizzas for Blaze Pizza Fans in Storrs Center on Friday, January 29*

January 25, 2016 – Los Angeles, Calif. – Blaze Fast Fire'd Pizza, the fast-casual artisanal pizza concept known for its chef-driven menu and casually hip restaurants, announced today that it will open near the University of Connecticut, in Storrs, CT, on Thursday, January 28th. To celebrate the grand opening, the restaurant will offer FREE build-your-own artisanal pizzas on Friday, January 29th from 11:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. to anyone who follows Blaze Pizza on Instagram, Twitter, or Facebook. The new restaurant, which features a 2,700 square foot interior with seating for 55, is located in Storrs Center (12 Royce Circle), a walkable downtown adjacent to UConn. The highly anticipated opening is the second Connecticut location for Blaze Pizza, which debuted in New Haven's Jordan's Furniture (40 Sargent Drive) in December.

Blaze Pizza is a modern day "pizza joint" serving up artisanal pizzas that are both fast and affordable. Since its first restaurant debuted in 2012, Blaze has quickly become one of the nation's hottest restaurant concepts, with fans lining up each day for the custom-built pizzas, freshly made salads, blood orange lemonade and s'more pies. Each restaurant features an interactive open-kitchen format that allows guests to customize one of the menu's signature pizzas or create their own, choosing from a wide selection of fresh, artisanal ingredients – all for about \$8. The generously-sized personal pizzas are then sent to a blazing hot open-flame oven – the centerpiece of the restaurant – where dedicated pizzasmiths ensure that the thin-crust pies are fast-fire'd and ready to eat in just 180 seconds. Restaurants make their own dough from scratch using a recipe developed by critically-acclaimed Executive Chef Bradford Kent (the "Pizza Whisperer"), which requires a 24-hour fermentation period to produce his signature light-as-air, crisp crust. For pizza fans with specific dietary needs, Blaze Pizza offers gluten-free dough and vegan cheese. The Storrs restaurant will also feature a selection of wine and craft beer.

"Our mission at Blaze is really simple – we're taking pizza back to its roots," said Jim Mizes, president & COO of Blaze Pizza. "By making dough in-house, carefully sourcing ingredients, and cooking by fire, we're giving guests a great way to enjoy artisanal pizza without the wait. It's changing the way people think about and eat pizza."

Blaze's obsessive attention to detail extends well beyond the food, with a carefully considered, modern approach to restaurant design. Driven by its commitment to "Intelligent Choices for Our Pizzas, People & Planet," the restaurant is constructed with recycled and sustainable materials, uses eco-friendly packaging, and features energy-efficient LED lighting. Additionally, many of the restaurant's unconventional design elements were inspired by the company's celebration of individual expression, including an oversized wall graphic, which was custom-built to suit the space.

Blaze Pizza is looking forward to continuing to build strong roots within the community. To that end, the company has developed a turn-key in-restaurant fundraiser program that returns 20% of an event's proceeds back to local organizations, and will be partnering with local schools, sports clubs and other organizations to host fundraising events at the new restaurant.

The restaurant will be operated by Lessing's Franchise Group, Inc., led by Michael and Mark Lessing. Lessing's Hospitality Group is one of New York's leading restaurant and catering companies. Their full-service restaurants include four-star Mirabelle, the waterfront View Restaurant, and trademark "Main Street" locations including Post Office Café, Maxwell's, Library Café and Finnegan's.

#### **About Blaze Pizza**

The first Blaze Pizza® restaurant opened on Aug. 6, 2012, in Irvine, Calif., and quickly gained attention for its chef-driven recipes, thoughtful interior design, and a service culture that celebrates individuality. Now ranked as the overall #2 fast-casual brand in FastCasual.com's annual Top 100 list, Blaze Pizza is building momentum and developing a cult-like following as it expands across the country. The company currently operates 107 restaurants in 25 states and Canada, including the major metropolitan areas of Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Toronto, Dallas and Washington D.C. Founded by Elise and Rick Wetzel (co-founder of Wetzel's Pretzels), the concept is backed by investors including LeBron James, Maria Shriver, Boston Red Sox co-owner Tom Werner and movie producer John Davis. For more information, please visit [blazepizza.com](http://blazepizza.com) and [facebook.com/blazepizza](https://facebook.com/blazepizza) or [click here to view a company video](#).

#### **About Storrs Center**

Storrs Center is a mixed-use town center and main street corridor at the crossroads of the Town of Mansfield, Connecticut and the University of Connecticut. Located along Storrs Road adjacent to the University, the Town Hall, the regional high school, and the community center, Storrs Center knits thoughtful architecture, pedestrian oriented streets, and public spaces into a series of small neighborhoods that make up the new fabric of the town center. Ground floor retail and commercial uses opening onto landscaped sidewalks reinforce traditional street front activity and is supported by rental and for-sale residences and shared community spaces. Visit [storrscenter.com](http://storrscenter.com) for more information.

Blaze Pizza®, Fast-Fire'd®, the horizontal logo design, and the proprietary names "Pizzasmith", "Intelligent Choices For Our Pizzas, People & Planet" and related trademarks are the property of Blaze Pizza LLC.

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